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Student Well-Being Framework

Calgary Board of Education

Table of Contents

Message from Superintendent **1**

Introduction **2**

What is Student Well-Being? **2**

Why Student Well-Being Matters **3**

Schools are Uniquely Positioned to Make a Difference **4**

Well-Being is Embedded Within Curriculum and Pedagogy **5**

- Well-Being and the CBE Education Plan and Learning Frameworks 5
- Well-Being and Assessment and Reporting 6
- Well-Being in Provincial Curriculum 6

Creating Conditions for Well-Being **7**

Foundational Approaches for Enacting the Framework **14**

- Continuum of Supports and Services 14
- A Tiered Approach to Student Well-Being 20

Key Strategies that Provide a Shared Foundation **21**

Conclusion **22**

References **23**

Message from Superintendent

Introducing the Student Well-Being Framework

Supporting student well-being is work of the heart. It is a responsibility that our students, families, staff and community consistently tell us matters deeply, and one that sits at the centre of creating schools where children and youth feel safe, connected, valued and able to thrive. It is reflected in provincial priorities, embedded in curriculum and highlighted throughout our education plans because we know that well-being and learning are inseparable. When students feel a sense of belonging, safety and hope, they are better able to engage, grow and experience success.

As educators, support staff, school and system leaders, you hold space for joy, uncertainty, struggle, growth and healing. You notice the quiet changes in a student's mood, the child who needs reassurance, the family carrying worry and the moments when a simple act of kindness can make all the difference. This work is meaningful, but it can also be complex and emotionally demanding. Supporting student well-being is deeply connected to staff well-being, and caring for others is not something meant to be carried alone.

Despite broad agreement about the importance of student well-being, understanding how best to support it within a K–12 education system has not always been clear. Schools and educators have access to an overwhelming range of resources, programs, perspectives and approaches. While this reflects a deep collective commitment to children and youth, it can sometimes feel difficult to know where to begin, what matters most or how to bring coherence to efforts already underway.

This Student Well-Being Framework has been developed with this reality in mind. Its intention is not to add another expectation, but to offer support, clarity and a shared path forward. Grounded in decades of research and evidence-informed practice, the framework brings together what we know about effectively promoting student well-being, strengthening early intervention and providing individualized supports within school communities.

Most importantly, this framework recognizes what educators already know to be true: relationships matter, belonging matters and the everyday moments of care, consistency and connection make a profound difference in the lives of students. This framework serves as both a practical guide and a source of reassurance, affirming the important work already happening in schools while helping to strengthen our collective ability to nurture the well-being of every student, together. Thank you for your continued care and commitment to students.

Jenn Turner

Dr. Jennifer Turner, Superintendent, School Improvement

Introduction

The purpose of the framework is not only to describe what student well-being is, but to clarify what schools are expected to do to create safe, inclusive and supportive learning environments where students can thrive academically, socially, emotionally and psychologically. To ensure consistency and implementation fidelity, the framework includes the foundational or minimum school-based expectations that define the essential universal, targeted and individualized practices required in every school setting.

The Calgary Board of Education (CBE) Student Well-Being Framework provides a clear, evidence-informed foundation for how schools promote, protect and respond to student well-being through consistent, proactive and responsive practice. It establishes a shared language, common expectations and a tiered continuum of supports that guide decision-making at classroom, school and system levels. Grounded in research, system priorities, provincial direction and lived experience, this framework positions well-being as a shared responsibility essential to student success and provides guidance for creating environments where all students can thrive.

The framework is built on:

- Six **Enabling Conditions**, starting on page 7, that must be true to establish the foundations needed to embed student well-being into teaching, learning, decision-making and collaborative practice.
- **Foundational Approaches for Enacting the Framework**, starting on page 14, including a continuum of supports and services applied in different ways across three tiers of support and key strategies that bring the framework to life.
- **Key Strategies**, starting on page 21, that provide a shared foundation for strengthening student well-being and mental health across K–12 schools.

What is Student Well-Being?

While well-being and mental health are often used interchangeably, this Framework understands well-being as a broad, overarching concept, while mental health is a key component of overall well-being. Other factors to well-being include belonging relationships, purpose and quality of life.

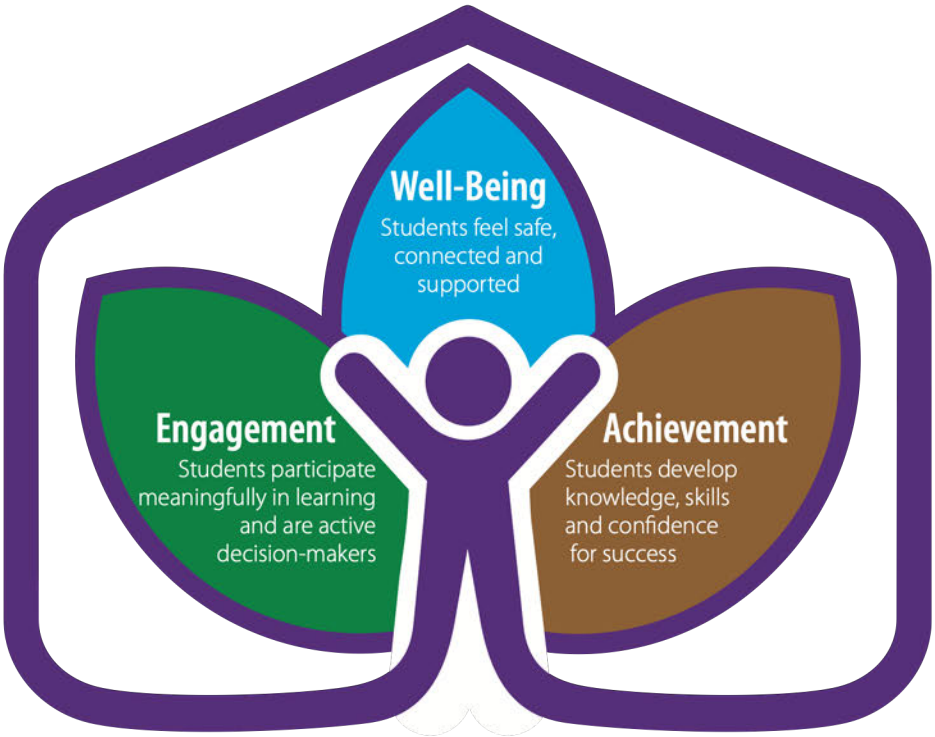
Well-being reflects students' overall quality of life, sense of meaning and purpose and capacity to contribute to their communities and society (World Health Organization [WHO], n.d.).

Mental health contributes to student well-being by supporting students' ability to cope with stress, recognize their abilities, learn and work well, build relationships and contribute to their communities (WHO, 2025). Mental health is also connected to enjoying life, managing challenges and recognizing the interconnection of physical, mental, emotional and spiritual wellness (Alberta Health Services, n.d.).

Universal mental health supports are associated with improved student engagement, stronger school connectedness, enhanced academic performance and more equitable understanding of mental health across diverse student populations (Turner et al., 2023).

Why Student Well-Being Matters

Sustainable academic achievement depends on learning environments where well-being and engagement are deliberately cultivated. Students who experience belonging, psychological safety, positive relationships, emotional regulation and access to appropriate supports are more likely to attend regularly, engage in learning, persist through challenges and demonstrate stronger academic outcomes.



Well-being, engagement and academic achievement are mutually reinforcing. Conversely, unmet social, emotional, behavioural and mental health needs can create significant barriers to concentration, participation, attendance, peer relationships, self-regulation and learning readiness.

Engagement, or the ability for students to participate meaningfully in learning, is a bridge between well-being and achievement. When instructional practices create opportunities for students to express ideas, collaborate, listen to others and co-construct meaning, that engagement contributes to purposeful learning, normalizes learning as a process, reduces fear of failure and strengthens confidence. Engagement, therefore, is not compliance driven, but relational arising when students feel respected, capable and emotionally supported within inclusive learning communities.

Schools are Uniquely Positioned to Make a Difference

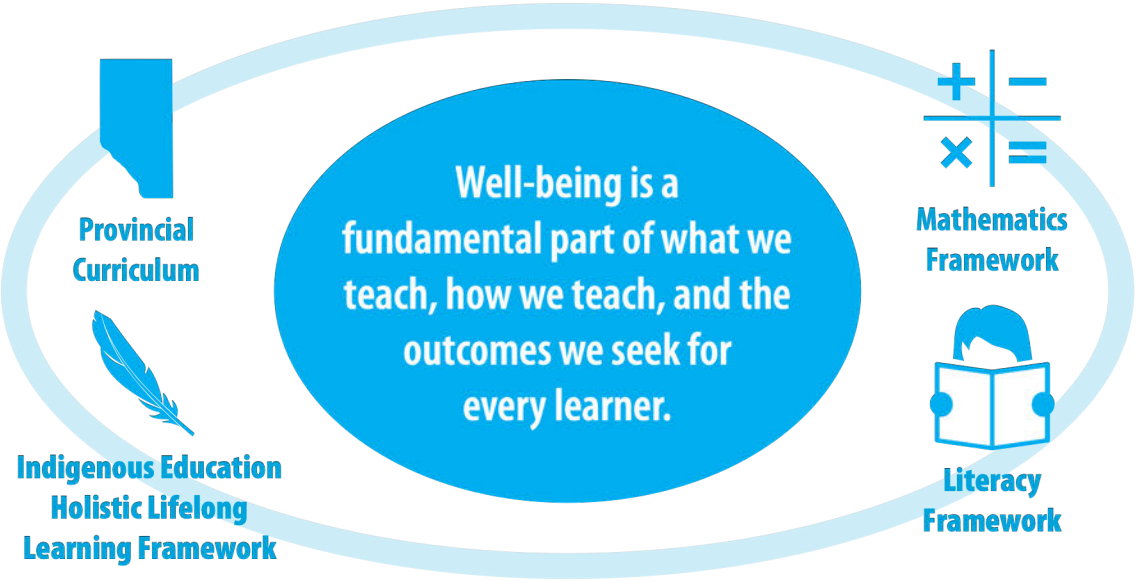
Schools are universal and accessible settings where students learn mental health literacy and wellness strategies, develop social-emotional competencies, form meaningful relationships and navigate differences with respect. This places schools in a unique position to provide early, timely and preventative support, often before concerns escalate to the point of requiring intensive or clinical intervention.

Within a school setting, work to promote student well-being is both essential and expected.

- We are a daily, trusted presence in the lives of students.
- We build relationships that foster belonging and connection.
- We notice early, respond quickly and connect students to what they need.
- We work together with families and communities to support every student.

Schools are central to student well-being, offering early, accessible support that reduces stigma and connects students to timely help (Kutcher & Wei, 2020). Through curricula like Wellness, Health, and CALM, they build mental health literacy, social-emotional skills and respectful relationships. Across K–12, students develop community and belonging in safe, inclusive environments (Alberta Education, 2017; CASEL, 2020).

Well-Being is Embedded Within Curriculum and Pedagogy



Well-Being in the CBE Education Plan and Learning Frameworks

Aligned with provincial curriculum, the **CBE Education Plan** prioritizes both achievement and well-being, recognizing that student success depends on conditions that enable students to attend, engage, regulate, participate and thrive.

The **Literacy** and **Mathematics Frameworks** bridge well-being, engagement and achievement by promoting learning environments where well-being, engagement and academic achievement are mutually reinforcing. They foster "student identity and engagement" (Calgary Board of Education, 2023, p. 4), emphasizing that literacy learning is social, relational and connected to belonging. Similarly, the Mathematics Framework defines effective mathematics environments as ones where students are supported to "take risks, make mistakes and learn from them" (CBE, 2023b, p. 5). Across all frameworks that guide excellence in learning, well-being is positioned as foundational to students' capacity to persist through challenge and participate meaningfully in all learning contexts.

The **Indigenous Education Holistic Lifelong Learning Framework**, grounded in the medicine wheel, positions learning as lifelong, relational and inseparable from well-being. Within this practice, the four domains of Spirit -To Be, Heart - To Belong, Body - To Do, and Mind - To Know are interconnected and must be nourished and developed in balance for Indigenous learners to thrive.

The Indigenous Education Holistic Lifelong Learning Framework is designed to provide a comprehensive pathway for supporting well-being and learning for students who self-identify as Indigenous by engaging the four domains of self. By valuing spiritual identity, fostering relationships and belonging, encouraging learning through lived experience and cultivating intellectual curiosity, the framework responds to the full range of student needs. This balanced approach recognizes that well-being is both personal and communal, shaped by culture, language, relationships, land and purpose.

"Let's visit together. Come as you are. As a person. This is protocol. This is our lodge. Our way of life. Sit with us. Visiting helps us to get to know each other, learn together, help each other and solve problems." – *Elder Miiksika'am*

"Every part of the body tells a story, connection of the mind, heart and spirit. Nourishment is not just food for the body, it is understanding the connection and respect for others" – *Edmee Comstock, Métis Elder, 2021*

Rooted in Indigenous community voice (Elders & Knowledge Keepers, students, families, staff and research), the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) 94 Calls to Action, and the CBE Education Plan 2024-27, the framework invites schools and systems to create learning and working environments where all students are supported to know where they come from, where they are going, why they are here and who they are as learners and human beings. These are conditions that are essential not only for academic success, but for lifelong well-being.

Well-Being in Assessment and Reporting

The interdependence between well-being, engagement and academic achievement is also reinforced through the **Assessment and Reporting in the CBE: Guiding Principles**, which explicitly connects assessment to student well-being and engagement rather than motivation.

Provincial curriculum, CBE guiding documents, and frameworks articulate a coherent system message: sustainable academic achievement depends on learning environments where well-being and engagement are deliberately cultivated.

Well-Being in Provincial Curriculum

Alberta's Education Act and Ministerial Order on Student Learning affirm that education supports the whole child: intellectual, social, emotional, physical and ethical development, while promoting well-being, citizenship and belonging as foundations for reaching full potential (Government of Alberta, 2012; Alberta Education, 2024).

The integration of the framework and curriculum is reinforced through task design, where well-being is explicitly embedded within mandated learning outcomes, ensuring universal classroom practices.

For instance, the **Alberta Physical Education and Wellness** curriculum includes explicit learning outcomes related to social-emotional skills, mental health literacy, relationship skills, safety and self-regulation and defines well-being as the balanced development of the whole individual. The curriculum embeds social and emotional learning, consent and mental well-being across all grades. Organizing ideas such as character development, healthy relationships, growth and development and safety emphasize empathy, emotional regulation, responsible decision making and personal responsibility as essential life skills that support lifelong health and community well-being (Alberta Education, 2025a).

Complementing this, Alberta's **Career Education and Financial Literacy** curriculum makes explicit connections between engagement, personal interests and future pathways by developing student self-awareness, career

exploration and goal setting while also teaching responsible spending, saving, budgeting and planning (Alberta Education, 2025b).

Together, these curricula support students in learning how their interests, choices and habits, both personal and financial, shape balanced life planning, long-term well-being and their ability to make informed decisions (Alberta Education, 2025a; Alberta Education, 2025b).

Enabling Conditions for Well-Being

Successful implementation of the Student Well-Being Framework requires more than evidence-informed practices and clearly articulated expectations. It requires that the following six enabling conditions be true so that evidence-informed practices can be implemented consistently, effectively and sustainably within everyday school contexts.

Holistic Lens

We see and support the whole child — social, emotional, physical, cultural and academic.

To Be - Spirit • To Belong - Heart • To Do - Body • To Know - Mind

Active Leadership

Leaders model, champion and sustain a culture of well-being.

Student-Centred Practice

We create equitable environments that are responsive to student needs. We value and support each learner while maintaining high expectations.

Continuous Improvement

We use data and research to understand needs, measure impact, guide decisions and inform learning refinement and future action.

Student Voice

Student voice and agency are welcomed, valued and acted upon.

Role Clarity

We clearly define who is responsible for what, when action is required and how staff collaborate to support students and respond when concerns arise.

Enabling conditions are the key drivers that translate theory into action. They establish the professional, structural, relational and organizational foundations needed to embed student well-being into teaching, learning, decision-making and collaborative practice. These conditions support coordinated prevention, timely intervention, meaningful collaboration and continuous improvement, so schools can provide consistent, equitable and responsive supports for all students.

Holistic Lens

Well-being is not achieved through isolated supports or academic outcomes alone. At the CBE, a holistic lens recognizes and supports the whole child, including the social, emotional, physical, cultural and academic dimensions of well-being.

The holistic lens honours **Indigenous understandings of holistic well-being**: to be, to belong, to do and to know. It is also **culturally responsive**, recognizing that students and families bring diverse ways of knowing, communicating, learning and understanding well-being. These diverse cultural strengths are essential sources of knowledge that inform responsive teaching, appropriate supports and meaningful relationships.

Indigenous Understandings of Holistic Well-Being

Indigenous holistic lifelong learning acknowledges that knowledge is carried, shared and renewed across generations, and that each stage of human development contributes to identity, belonging, resilience and purpose. When learning honours these connections, it becomes a powerful way of creating safety, belonging and inclusion, which are core foundations of individual and collective well-being for all learners.

Spirit - To Be includes strengthening spiritual and cultural identity and pride, coming to know who you are and developing a sense of purpose. Values, beliefs, identity, fears, thoughts and feelings shape how people interpret their experiences and make meaning.

When students and adults are grounded in this self-awareness and in spirit, it influences how they show up for one another each day, nurturing hope, peace and purpose within the school and greater community.

Heart - To Belong centres on building and strengthening relationships with Indigenous Elders, students, families and community so that Indigenous ways of being, belonging, doing and knowing are genuinely valued and included across CBE schools and service units for all students and staff.

Student voice and Indigenous knowledge affirm that positive, trusting relationships, especially having at least one meaningful connection with an adult at school, strengthen engagement, participation, safety and belonging. This connection deepens when students see their cultures and languages authentically reflected in their learning environments.

Body - To Do emphasizes learning through the physical act of doing in place, using the body, the physical environment and the natural world. It recognizes learning as a living and relational process of watching, listening, connecting, responding and renewing.

This domain reminds us that well-being is not only something people understand or discuss. It is experienced and strengthened through everyday actions, relationships, environments and opportunities to participate.

Mind - To Know underscores balanced, holistic and lifelong learning driven by curiosity, personal responsibility for well-being and the ability to apply problem-solving strategies with humility and integrity. Education for Reconciliation creates ethical space where Indigenous and Western knowledge systems can sit alongside one another in harmony.

Through this holistic lifelong learning lens, the four domains are understood in relationship with one another. Together, they form an integrated system that shapes the conditions, approach and strategies in this document, beyond a checklist of actions.

The Student Well-Being and Indigenous Education Holistic Lifelong Learning Frameworks are in kinship, rooted in a shared understanding that well-being and learning are relational and interconnected. This kinship becomes visible through everyday practices that sustain identity, relationship, connection and continuity across changing needs and contexts.

Culturally Responsive Practice

Culturally responsive practice recognizes that culture, language, identity and lived experience shape how students and families experience learning, relationships and well-being.

For newcomers and refugee students, this includes recognizing the effects of language acquisition, migration, disrupted schooling, family separation, settlement experiences and adjustment to unfamiliar educational and social expectations. It also means avoiding making assumptions about a student's abilities, behaviour, family engagement or well-being based on language proficiency or cultural differences. Appropriate interpretation, accessible communication and partnership with students, families, cultural supports and community organizations help ensure that students can participate fully and access timely assistance.

Families and communities also hold important cultural and contextual knowledge. Their perspectives help educators understand student strengths, experiences and needs and inform how supports are designed, provided and evaluated. Particular attention must be given to students, families and communities that have been marginalized, systemically excluded or afforded limited voice, power or access to opportunity.

Applying a holistic lens begins with educator self-awareness, humility and sustained critical reflection. Educators examine how their identities, experiences, values and assumptions influence their interpretation of student behaviour, communication, engagement and need. Reflection alone, however, is insufficient. Students experience inclusion through the actions, language, decisions and patterns of practice that shape their daily lives at school.

What holistic lens means in practice

Notice: Observe the whole student, including their identity, culture, language, relationships, experiences and ways of knowing.

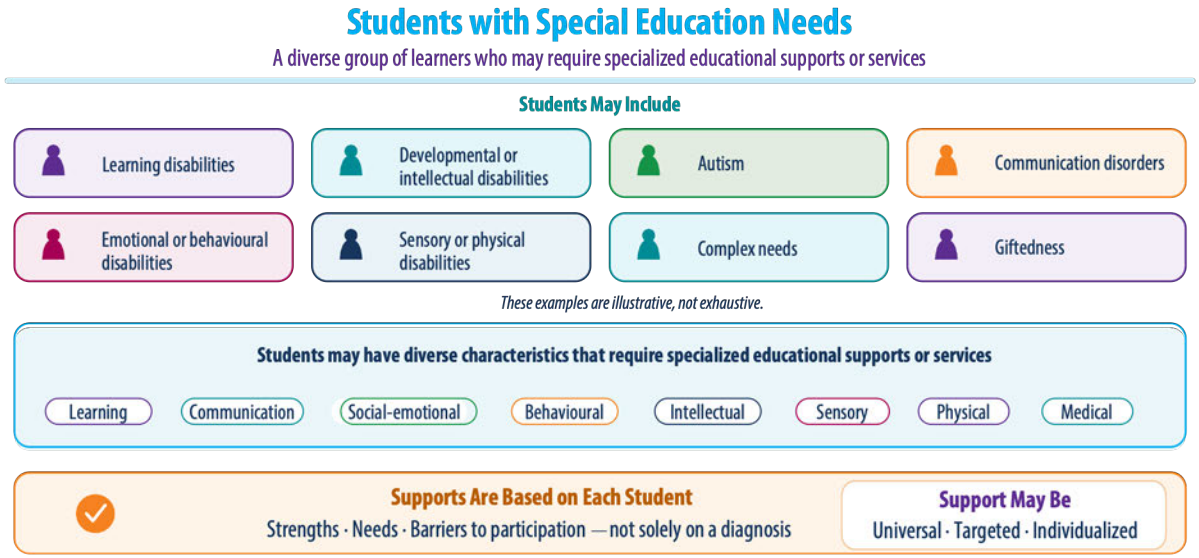
Consider: How is the student being supported to be, belong, do and know? Whose cultural or contextual knowledge may be missing from your understanding?

Act: Seek relevant student, family and community perspectives and use what you learn to inform teaching, relationships and support.

Student-Centred Practice

A holistic lens shapes how educators understand students and their contexts. Student-centred practice puts that understanding into action by creating equitable learning environments that respond to individual strengths and needs. Equitable participation in education is inseparable from student well-being. It is reflected in how learning environments, relationships, instruction, assessment, supports and pathways to services are designed and experienced.

Student-centred practice begins with knowing each learner: their strengths, needs, identities, cultures, languages, experiences, interests and aspirations and using this understanding to create meaningful opportunities for participation, belonging and success.



Student-centred practice moves beyond treating all students in the same way. It maintains high expectations while recognizing that students may need different conditions and supports to participate, learn and thrive. This includes using differentiated and accessible instruction, assessment and communication and removing barriers to learning, participation and access to support.

What student-centred practice means in practice

Notice: Identify the learner's strengths, needs, interests and aspirations, as well as barriers that may be affecting participation or learning.

Consider: Does the learning environment provide this student with an equitable opportunity to participate, belong and succeed?

Act: Maintain high expectations while adapting instruction, assessment, communication or support in response to the learner.

Student Voice

Seeking student feedback is an essential act of inclusion. Students are experts in their own experiences, and their perspectives help identify what support is needed, whether it is helping and what may need to change.

Student voice is integral to system-level councils, Student Well-Being Action Teams, Commùn-i-Tea gatherings and student-led planning processes. These opportunities help move well-being strategies beyond assumptions and make them responsive to students' needs (Montemurro et al., 2023).

Student voice is essential across well-being promotion, early intervention and more individualized supports. Supports are most effective when they are responsive to learner voice, identity and context (Alberta Education, 2022). As needs become more complex, student perspectives provide timely insight that can guide adjustments to support. Within mental health support pathways, this responsiveness can be the difference between early intervention and prolonged distress (Alberta Education, 2017).

What student voice means in practice

Notice: Pay attention to whose perspectives are being heard, whose are missing and how students experience current practices and supports.

Consider: How can students meaningfully influence decisions that affect their learning and well-being?

Act: Invite student perspectives, demonstrate that they have been considered and, where possible, act upon what students share.

Active Leadership

Leaders play a key role in championing a shared vision, building staff capacity, aligning resources and embedding supports into everyday school practices so they become integral to teaching and learning.

Active leadership mobilizes and connects the other enabling conditions through collaboration, professional learning, strategic resourcing and the use of evidence. Through ongoing and strategic involvement, school and system-based leaders establish and sustain the organizational conditions necessary to provide effective supports and services that meet diverse student needs (Turner et al., 2024; Friesen et al., 2025).

Leadership is shared across roles and contexts. While formal leaders hold responsibility for vision, structures, capacity and resources, all staff contribute to a culture in which student well-being is understood as a collective responsibility and an integral part of teaching and learning.

Information helps ensure practices and supports are increasingly focused, responsive and individualized. The purpose is not simply to collect data, but to support timely, equitable and transparent decisions about what should be sustained, adapted, intensified or discontinued.

What active leadership means in practice

Notice: Look for where well-being is or is not reflected in everyday priorities, decisions, structures and practices.

Consider: What conditions do staff need to support student well-being consistently and sustainably?

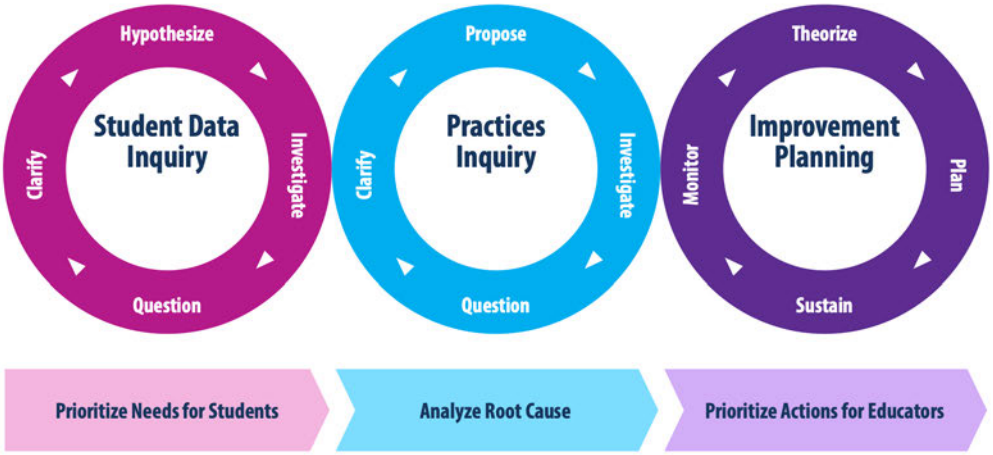
Act: Align vision, professional learning, collaboration, resources and school practices to strengthen a shared culture of well-being.

Continuous Improvement

A continuous improvement cycle uses information to understand student needs, guide action and strengthen well-being supports over time. School staff work collaboratively through an ongoing cycle to:

- identify strengths and priority needs;
- establish clear and measurable outcomes;
- select and implement an appropriate instructional and/or support strategy;
- monitor implementation and student response; and
- use the findings to determine next steps.

This process depends on purposeful leadership, collaboration and meaningful information from multiple sources, including student and family perspectives, staff observations, attendance and engagement information, perception surveys, progress monitoring measures and other relevant school and system data. Information should be considered within the local, cultural and relational context.



Adapted from the WISExplore Data Inquiry Process

Continuous improvement considers both outcomes and implementation. Teams examine whether the intended changes are occurring and whether the selected strategy is being implemented consistently and as designed. Review cycles, team responsibilities, decision points and resulting actions should be clearly established and documented so that information leads to timely action.

What continuous improvement means in practice

Notice: Gather information from multiple sources to understand student strengths, priority needs and responses to support.

Consider: Is the intended change occurring, and is the selected strategy being implemented as intended?

Act: Use what is learned to sustain, adapt, intensify or discontinue the strategy and determine next steps.

Role Clarity

Everyone has a role in creating the conditions that help students feel safe, connected, engaged and successful. Clearly defined roles, responsibilities, competencies and decision-making processes are necessary for effective and coordinated student well-being supports. Without this precision, systems become fragmented, supports are delayed or duplicated and staff experience unnecessary strain.

Students
- Sharing their voice and perspectives
- Building relationships and self-awareness
- Participating in learning and support opportunities

School Leaders
- Creating the conditions for student well-being
- Leading coordinated school-wide approaches that strengthen learning, belonging, and engagement
- Aligning resources and supports to identified needs

Teachers
- Creating inclusive and supportive learning environments
- Designing meaningful learning experiences that promote engagement and well-being
- Building positive relationships and promoting belonging

Families and Caregivers
- Sharing strengths, needs and insights
- Partnering in planning
- Supporting student well-being at home and school

Community Partners
- Extending services and specialized or family-based supports
- Strengthening pathways to care
- Collaborating to meet student needs

School Improvement and Service Units
- Providing specialized expertise and consultation
- Building capacity through collaboration and support
- Coordinating targeted and individualized supports

Differentiated roles enable school-based staff to focus on promotion, prevention and early intervention, while system-based teams provide specialized consultation, coordination and additional support. Role clarity enables staff to act with confidence and consistency, strengthens accountability and ensures that mental health and instructional supports are coordinated rather than disconnected.

Research shows that unclear roles contribute directly to implementation breakdowns and increased staff burden, underscoring the need for deliberate and system-wide role definition (MacGregor et al., 2024).

What role clarity means in practice

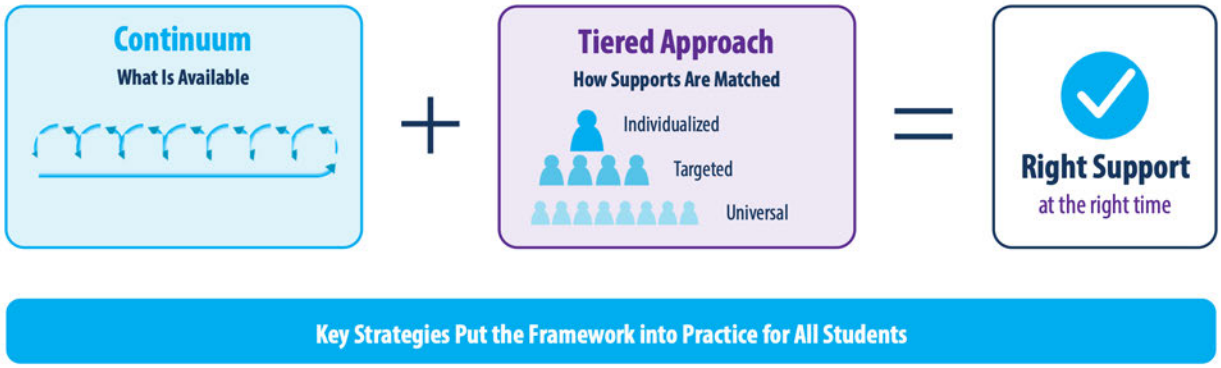
Notice: Identify where responsibilities, decisions, communication or next steps are unclear.

Consider: Who has the knowledge, responsibility and authority to act? Who else should be involved?

Act: Clarify responsibilities for action, coordination, communication and follow-up.

Foundational Approaches for Enacting the Framework

The Student Well-Being Framework uses two related approaches to explain what supports are available and how they are provided. A **continuum of supports and services** describes the range of supports available, while a **tiered approach** explains how those supports are matched to student needs. Together, they provide a practical structure for delivering coordinated, responsive support. **Key strategies** bring the framework to life for all



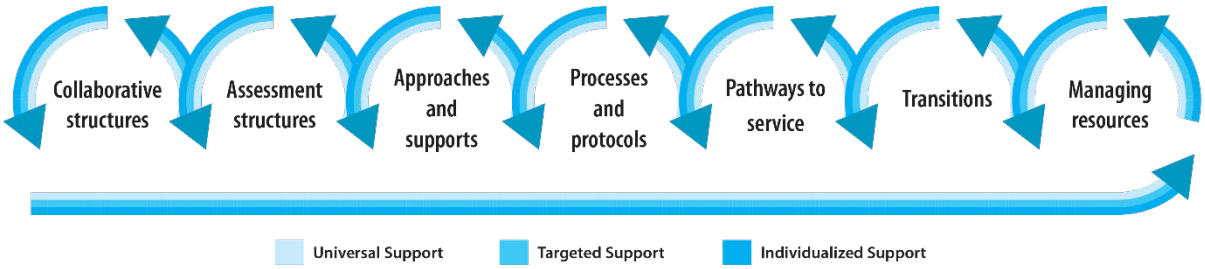
This foundation helps schools provide the right support at the right time. It also creates a shared understanding among students, families, educators, interdisciplinary teams and community partners of how student well-being is supported consistently across classrooms, schools and the broader education system.

Continuum of Supports and Services

The continuum of supports and services describes the full range of supports available to students. It is organized around seven interconnected elements that identify the conditions, structures, practices, partnerships and processes needed to promote well-being and respond to changing student needs.

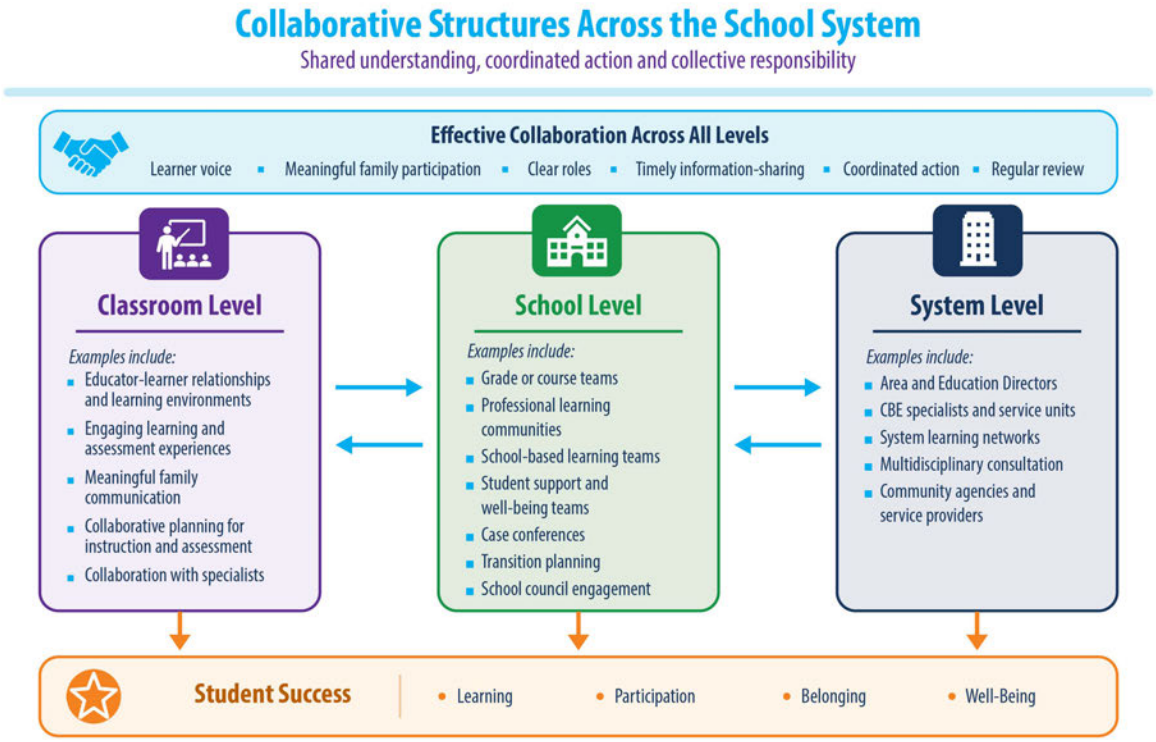
Grounded in the understanding that student well-being is best supported through coordinated prevention, early intervention and responsive individualized care, a continuum of supports and services moves student well-being from conceptual aspiration to intentional practice by clarifying the structures, responsibilities and collaborative actions required to support students effectively across varying levels of need. Defined by Alberta Education (2022) as an intentionally designed and flexible set of actions, strategies, interventions and services, it ensures that supports are organized to respond to the diverse, changing and often interconnected academic, social, emotional, behavioural and mental health needs of students.

When implemented consistently, the continuum of supports and services improves equitable access to timely supports, strengthens school–family–community partnerships, increases early identification of student need, and creates greater consistency in how schools respond to concerns before they intensify (Alberta Education, 2022).



Collaborative Structures

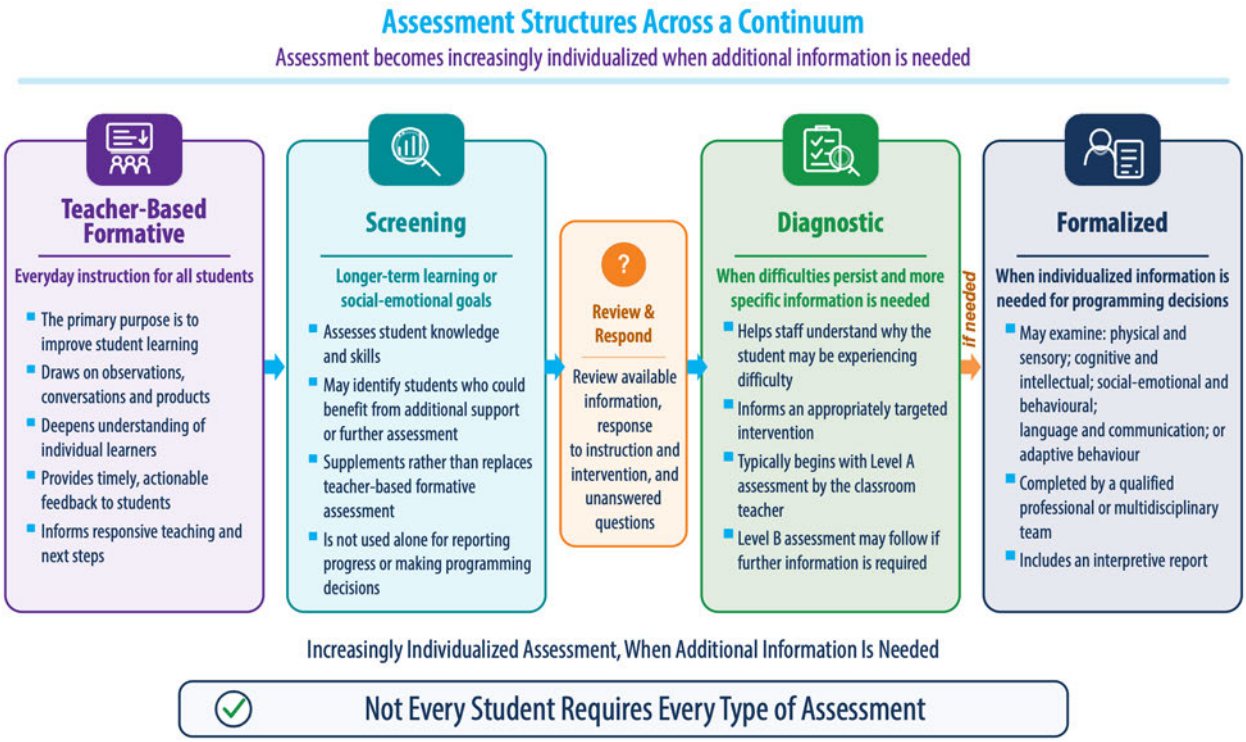
Collaborative structures are the established teams, routines and processes through which learners, school staff, parents and caregivers, CBE service units and community partners work together to support student learning and well-being. These structures promote shared understanding, coordinated action and collective responsibility for student success.



Across all levels, effective collaborative structures include learner voice, meaningful family participation, clearly defined roles, timely information-sharing, coordinated actions and regular review of whether the agreed-upon supports are improving learning, participation, belonging and well-being.

Assessment Structures

Assessment structures are the coordinated ways a school gathers, interprets and uses information to understand student strengths, identify needs early, plan instruction and determine whether supports are working. They occur along a continuum; not every student requires every type of assessment.

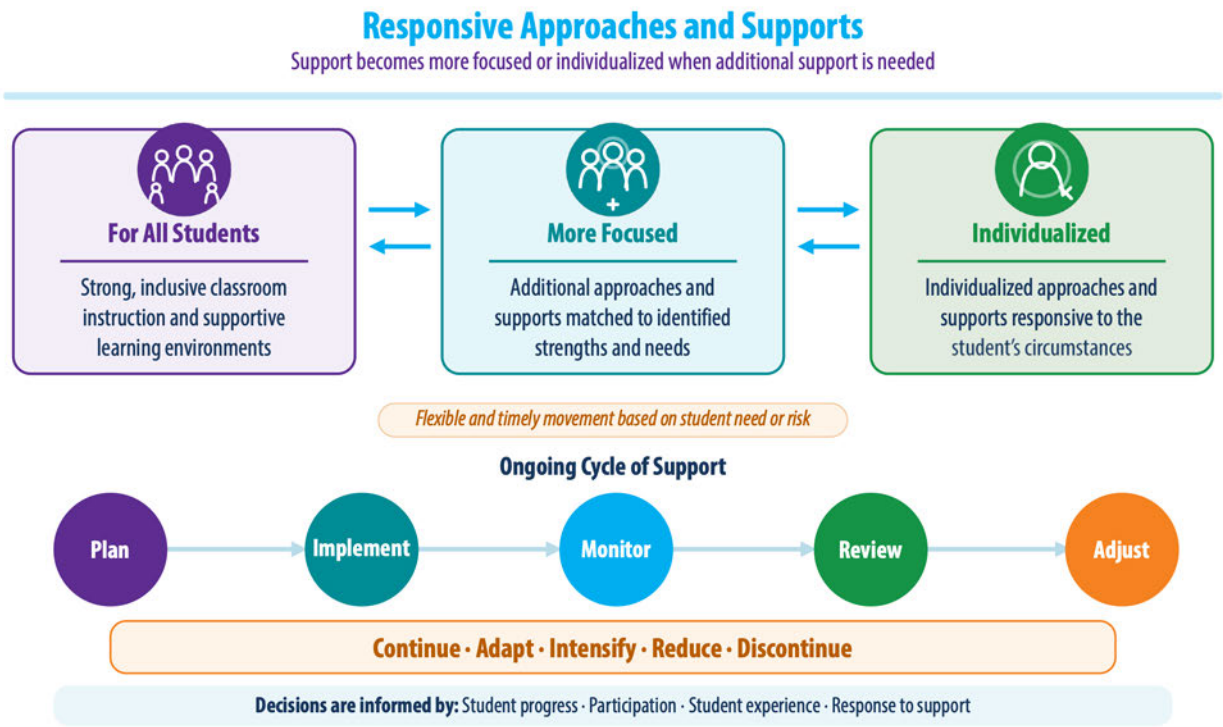


Assessment is an ongoing process, not a single test, label or decision. Decisions to move toward diagnostic or formalized assessment are made through review of available assessment information, the student's response to instruction and intervention, and the specific questions that remain unanswered. School staff collaborate with the student, parents or caregivers and, where required, qualified professionals to determine whether further assessment is necessary. Assessment becomes more individualized only when the additional information is needed to understand the student's needs, select appropriate supports or make informed programming decisions.

Approaches and Supports

Approaches and supports include the teaching practices, interventions, accommodations, tools and environmental adjustments used to help students participate, learn and experience success while strengthening their sense of safety, belonging, connection and well-being. They begin with strong, inclusive classroom instruction and supportive learning environments for all students and become more focused or individualized when a student requires additional support.

Approaches and supports are planned, implemented, monitored and reviewed over time. Decisions are informed by student progress, participation, experience and response to support. Movement across levels of support is flexible and timely; students do not need to progress through every level before receiving a more intensive response when a need or risk requires it.

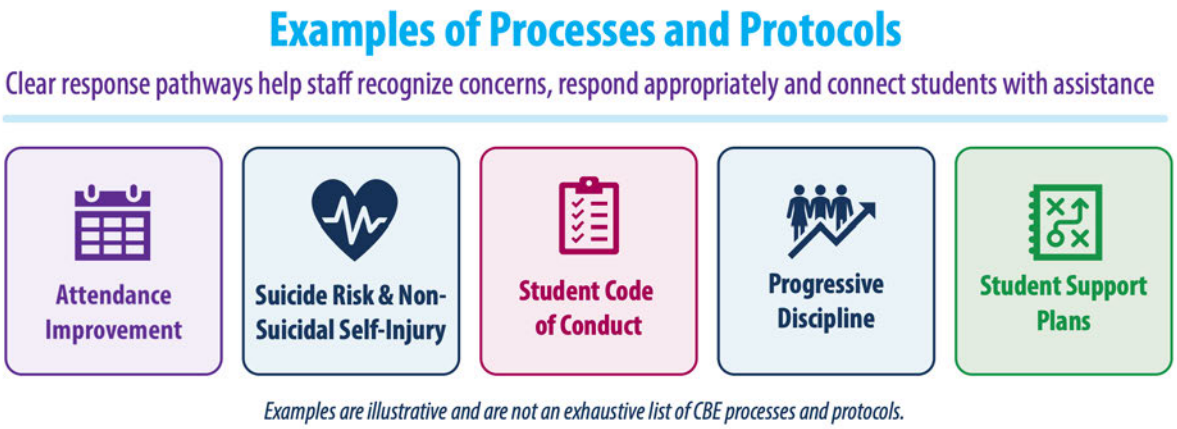


Educational approaches and supports promote well-being and reduce barriers to learning, but they do not replace clinical assessment or treatment when required. Where additional expertise or an urgent response is required, staff must activate established referral, safety or emergency-response processes.

Processes and Protocols

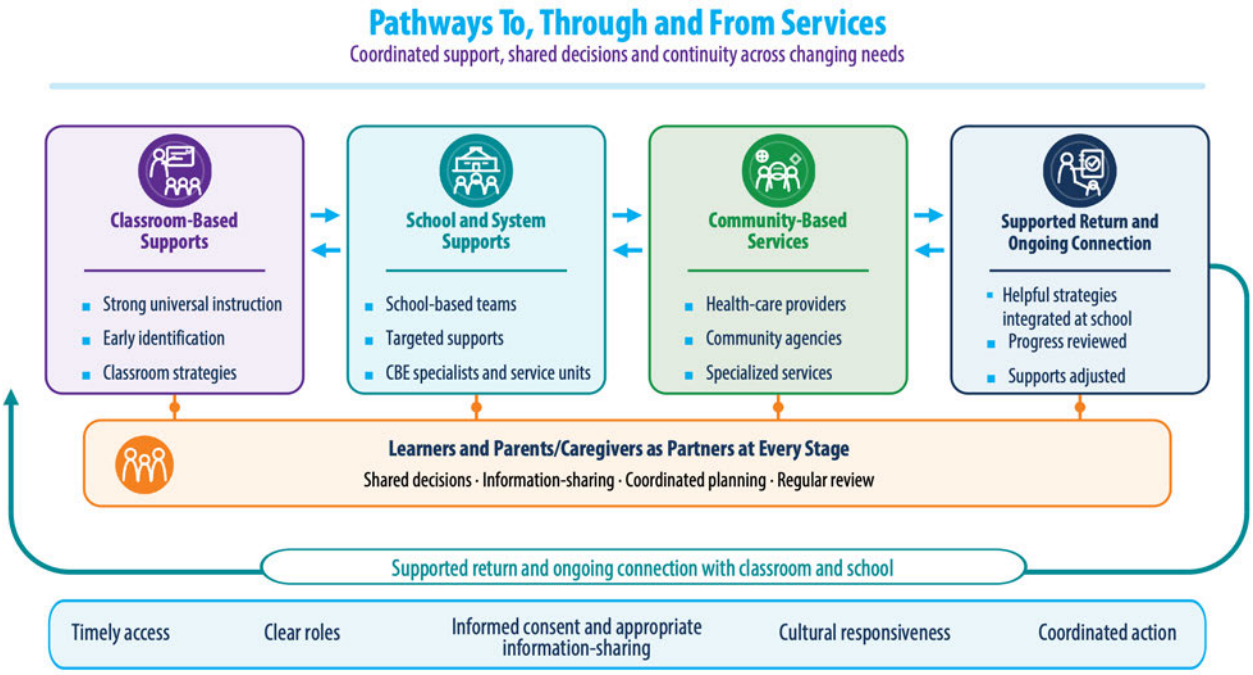
Procedures and protocols are clear, agreed-upon directions that help school staff recognize a concern, respond appropriately and connect the student with the right assistance.

Protocols and procedures may include screening assessments, interventions, referral processes and roles and responsibilities. They do not replace professional judgment. Rather, they provide a reliable response pathway so that action does not depend on which adult first receives the information.



Pathways to Service

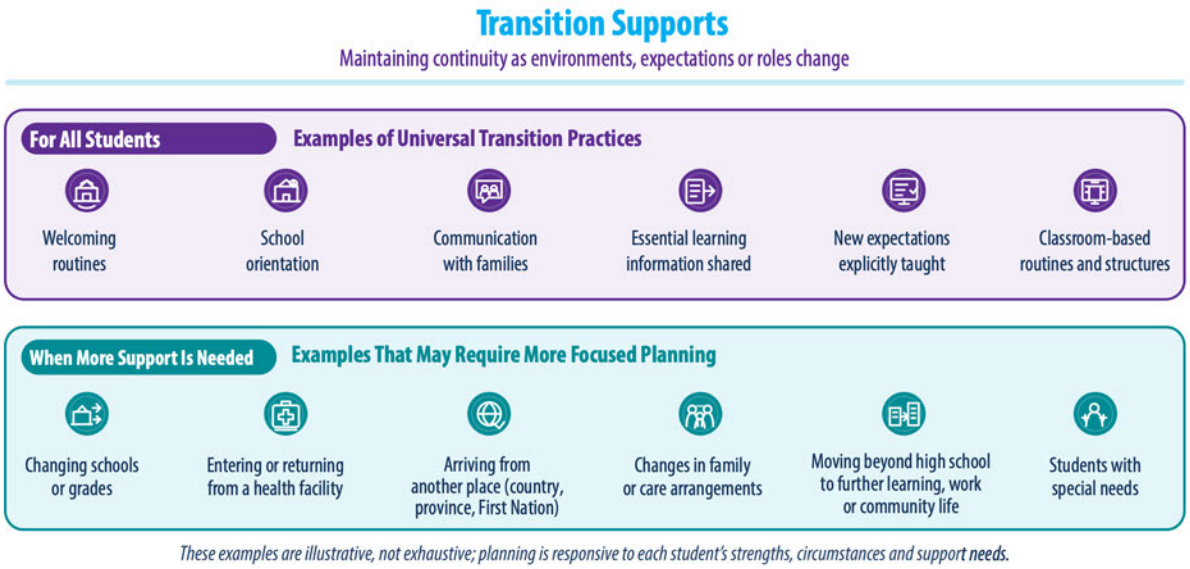
Pathways to, through and from services are the visible and coordinated routes by which a student accesses support, receives that support and reconnects with regular classroom and school routines. A pathway extends beyond making a referral: it ensures that someone helps the student and family navigate each stage and that support remains connected to the student's education.



Transitions

Transitions are planned supports that maintain continuity in a student's learning, relationships, well-being and access to services when environments, expectations or roles change. They include routine changes that are part of the school experience and more complex changes that may require individualized planning.

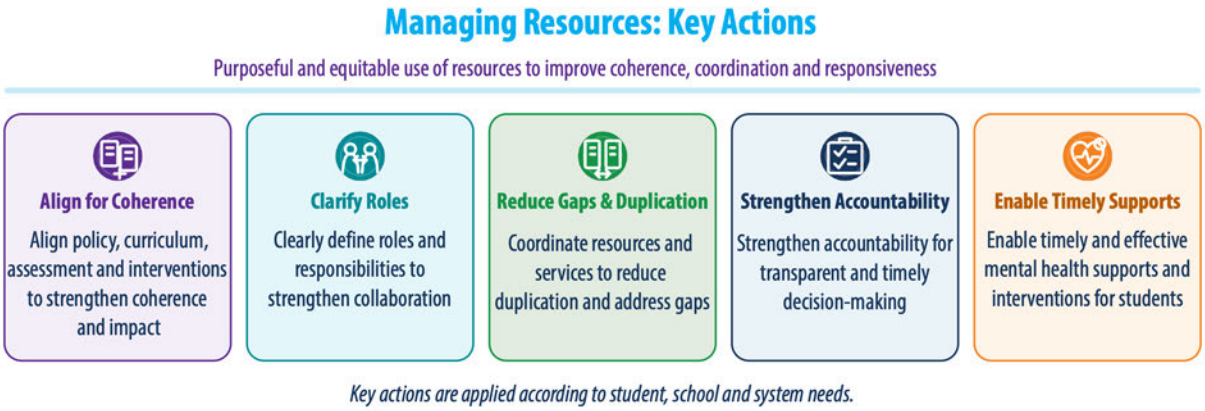
Transition practices range from universal supports for all students to more focused planning responsive to a student's circumstances and support needs.



Effective transitions occur throughout the school year and involve planning with student, family, sending and receiving staff and relevant service providers. Planning identifies the student's strengths, concerns, important relationships, successful strategies and required supports. Necessary information is shared appropriately, and the student is supported to develop self-advocacy and confidence. Follow-up determines whether the plan is working in the new setting.

Managing Resources

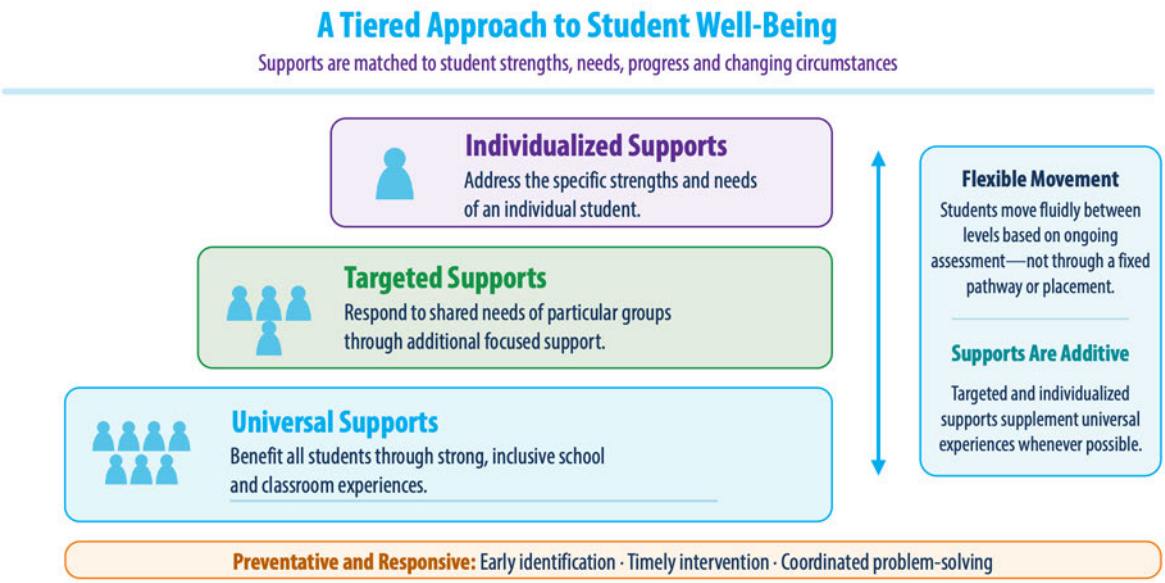
Managing resources is the purposeful and equitable use of people, time, expertise, spaces, materials, technology, partnerships and funding to meet student needs across the continuum. Equitable allocation means that resources are matched to need; it does not necessarily mean providing every student or school with the same resources.



In day-to-day practice, educators use available time, expertise, tools and partnerships intentionally. Teachers embed social-emotional learning in instruction, build trusting relationships and communicate with families. When additional needs emerge, they document relevant information, use assessment to guide support, collaborate with appropriate teams and maintain consistent universal strategies aligned with the student's plan.

A Tiered Approach to Student Well-Being

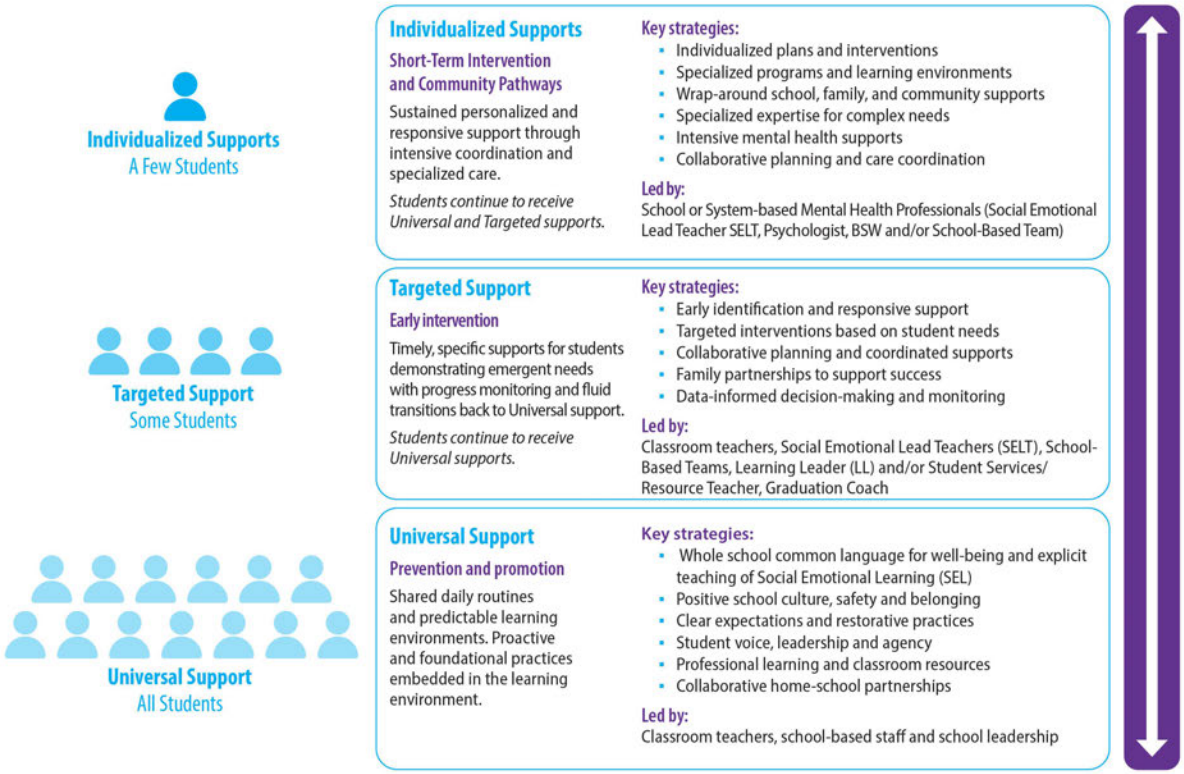
A tiered approach is both preventative and responsive. Through shared responsibility, interdisciplinary collaboration and data-informed decision-making, it creates consistency in how schools promote well-being, respond to emerging concerns and coordinate supports across educational and community systems (Alberta Education, 2022).



Key Strategies that Provide a Shared Foundation

CBE has identified a set of evidence-informed strategies that provide a shared foundation for strengthening student well-being and mental health across K–12 schools. Grounded in established research and recognized practices in mental health promotion, prevention, early intervention and individualized support, these strategies help create safe, caring, inclusive and responsive learning environments.

Student supports are organized through a continuum that is preventative, responsive and flexible. Supports are tiered—not students. Supports are layered to build on one another.



The strategies are preventative, responsive and interconnected. Targeted and individualized supports build upon, rather than replace, strong universal practices. Supports are tiered; students are not. Students may receive different levels or combinations of support over time, including support across more than one level simultaneously.

Decisions are informed by multiple sources of information, professional judgment, student and family perspectives, cultural considerations and ongoing monitoring of the student's response. Across all levels of support, implementation emphasizes belonging, inclusion, student voice, strong relationships, family partnership and collaboration among school, area, system and community partners.

Specific programs, staffing models, resource allocations and implementation timelines are established and updated through accompanying implementation plans.

Conclusion

The Student Well-Being Framework is intended to be more than a document; it is a shared commitment to supporting students in ways that are thoughtful, responsive and grounded in care. It provides a coherent, whole-system approach that brings greater clarity, consistency and confidence to this important work, while recognizing the expertise, relationships and compassion already present within our schools.

Grounded in research and evidence-informed practice, the framework provides shared language, common understanding and practical direction. The Enabling Conditions describe the values, environments and ways of working that help students feel safe, connected, included and supported. The Foundational Approach establishes key strategies and a coordinated continuum of supports and services responsive to students' diverse and evolving needs. To promote consistency and effective implementation, the framework clearly establishes foundational school-based expectations that outline the essential universal, targeted and individualized practices required across all school settings.

At its heart, this framework recognizes that student well-being grows through relationships, belonging and caring environments where students feel seen, understood and supported. It also recognizes that educators cannot do this work alone. By strengthening alignment across schools and the system while honouring the unique strengths, needs and identities of each school community, the framework supports a balance of consistency and flexibility. This reflects CBE's shared commitment to ensuring every student experiences the conditions needed to feel safe, valued, supported and able to thrive.

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